

LEAN TRANSFORMATION GENERATES SIGNIFICANT INCREASE
IN PRODUCTION EFFICIENCY

ABOUT PRIME RESOURCES CORPORATION. Prime Line® has been a leading supplier in the promotional product industry since 1980. Based in Bridgeport, Connecticut, with around five hundred employees, Prime Line offers more than 1,600 items in 15 product categories, and sells primarily in North America through a network of distributors. The company markets promotional items such as bags, drinkware, writing instruments, apparel, stationary, gift sets, and novelties. In 2017, the Prime Line merged with alphabroder, the largest supplier of imprintable apparel in North America.

THE CHALLENGE. Prime Line needed to improve the productivity of its pad printing department. Business was surging, and printing was a key source of revenue for the company. Management wanted to grow without having to buy new machines or hire more people. Their goal was to increase efficiency by a minimum of 10 percent. Having previously worked with CONNSTEP, part of the MEP National Network, Prime Line reached out to them again, this time for training assistance in Lean Manufacturing tools and techniques.

MEP CENTER'S ROLE. CONNSTEP met with the Prime Line production team to review the challenges they faced on a daily basis in the pad printing area. After initiating a Value Stream Mapping process and identifying areas of waste, the CONNSTEP team worked with key Prime Line employees on set-up reduction to help reduce the amount of downtime between production runs. CONNSTEP also introduced 5S workplace organization (sort, set in order, shine, standardize, sustain) to the production area to help the company achieve a less cluttered workplace and be better prepared for next-in-line orders. The improvements reduced machine downtime, material waste, and defects, and led to higher productivity. Prime Line exceeded their initial goal by increasing efficiency nearly 15 percent, turning out more products per day to meet their increased business demands, and applying Lean tools to find opportunities for cost savings.

An incremental benefit was increased employee engagement and higher morale due to a sense of participation in and ownership of the new production process. "Working with CONNSTEP on this project, our employees came to understand how waste happens and how it adds up, which helped them to contribute to improving our print production process," explained Ambrose Njoku, Prime Line Production Manager. Many solutions came from group leaders in different departments, and strong sales positioned the company to both add and retain jobs.

"Thanks to CONNSTEP we're not wasting or scrapping. We're working smarter and more efficiently, which leads to greater savings that are shared with all employees. It's a win-win situation for our company and employees, and for our customers. We're able to ship a quality product and fulfill our mission of providing the ultimate customer experience."

-Jerry Russo, Senior VP of Operations

RESULTS



\$185,000 in
increased/retained sales



37 new or retained jobs



\$155,000 in cost savings



15% increase in efficiency

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